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ENVOY

"Life is the game that must be played :
This truth at least, good friends, we know ;
So live and laugh, nor be dismayed
As one by one the phantoms go."

NEWMAN I. WHITE.

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NEGRO FOLK RHYMES. By Thomas W. Talley. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1922.

This collection has the vitality, the contagious good humor, the refreshing nonsense one knowing the race would expect, with the occasional touch of pathos, as here and there the dark story of slavery crops out. Some of the crude childish jingles belong to the great mass of nonsense literature, but from another and more important point of view they belong to the still larger class of folk literature.

The student of folk literature should welcome the book as a distinct contribution to his source material. Moreover, the compiler has included a valuable study of the material and, among other things, has performed a real service in explaining 'call' and 'sponse', the Negro 'solo' and 'chorus'. Of not least value is the description by Mr. Talley, who witnessed it, of the making of a secular rhyme.

But here appreciation must end. The book is marred by gross carelessness on the compiler's part. A number of the rhymes should not have been included. Some are distinctly not of Negro origin, others probably not. No doubt, every one in the collection is heard among Negroes, but this does not prove them of Negro origin. The whites of the South also have an enormous store of folk-songs and jingles, many of them brought over from England and Scotland long ago. Some of these the Negro has picked up and used *verbatim*; others he has adapted and enlarged; and from still others he has taken suggestions. The reverse process has also taken place.

For instance, *The Mule's Kick* is simply the last stanza, very slightly altered, of a poem by Irwin Russell called *Nebuchadnezzar*.

zar. The first stanza of *Captain Dime* is a part of the nationally known *Old Dan Tucker*, as is also the first stanza of *Aunt Dinah Drunk*. And such an apparently recent rhyme as *The Negro and the Policeman* is an alteration of an earlier one of the whites beginning *Old Mister Johnson Turn Me Loose*. Halliwell's *Popular Rhymes and Nursery Tales* (London, 1849) proves Mr. Talley's *Roses Red* to have been known in England, in a better version, at least seventy-five years ago. *Satan*, as Northall's *English Folk-Rhymes* (London, 1892) shows, has long been known to the people of rural Britain; and from the same source we learn that the ancestors of *Negro Baker Man* and *Kneel on this Carpet* have likewise long been favorites of the country folk. There might be some question about *Frog Went A-Courting*, but for years it has been known in most parts of the United States. Campbell and Sharp have found it among the secluded mountaineers, who have practically no contact with the Negro; and have included it in their *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*. Examples might be multiplied, but these are enough. Not a few of the rhymes have for years been published, in practically the same form, in children's jingle books.

Several minor faults might be pointed out. Not enough effort is made to give an approximate date to the rhymes. Even the inclusion of mistaken material does not irreparably impair the collection; yet this does keep it from being "authentic for the student of folk literature". The undertaking is a useful one and should be continued.

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THE FIRST WORLD WAR: 1914-1918. By C. à Court Repington. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1920. Two volumes. Pp. xvii, 621; xiii, 581.

Lieutenant-Colonel Repington has produced a capital view of the Great War as seen through 'public-school' English eyes,—eyes, too, in this instance, of exceptional range and vision on account of exceptional opportunity, yet without much real *insight*. The book is exactly what it professes to be: a record of personal experiences and opinions based upon the writer's personal notes, letters and diaries. There are helpfully—sometimes rather